



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

**Department of Environmental
Conservation**

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
Environmental Health Laboratory

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June 28, 2013

RE: Environmental Health Laboratory Temporary Closure for Training

To our valued clients:

The Environmental Health Laboratory (EHL) will be closed Monday, July 29 through Wednesday, July 31, 2013 for all activities, to include: testing, reporting, deliveries, and technical assistance.

The EHL is working on an operational plan to obtain international accreditation, ISO 17025. This is a multi-year plan; a key component of the first year is to train the entire staff on the standards of compliance as a foundation to proceed to accreditation. Towards that end, the entire staff will be in training July 29 through July 31.

The basis of seeking accreditation is to build and maintain a strong quality management system. While this accomplishment alone is worthy of the pursuit, a complimentary driver of this venture is the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), signed into law in January 2011.

One of the key components of the FSMA is that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) must develop and implement strategies to leverage the food safety and defense capacities of state and local agencies including the establishment of an integrated consortium of laboratory networks. The FSMA requires certain food testing to be carried out by accredited laboratories. In order to utilize state data or laboratory facilities, there must be a common standard of quality equivalent to ISO 17025 accreditation.

The EHL is part of FDA's laboratory consortium and is committed to maintaining a quality management system and achieving ISO 17025 accreditation in the coming years.

Please plan your sampling events carefully given this temporary, yet critical service disruption. If you have specific questions regarding your sampling schedule or when you can expect results following this closure, please contact Shipping/Receiving at 375-8231 or Customer Service at 375-8278.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patryce D. McKinney".

Patryce D. McKinney, MBA
Chief, Environmental Health Laboratory